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INFO RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1368  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0954  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1872  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 002878

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, DRL, DRL/IRF  
INR FOR CHARLIE ZENZIE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/11/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KIRF](#) [KISL](#) [PHUM](#) [ID](#)  
SUBJECT: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM -- POLICE, MUSLIM GROUPS  
PRESSURE "DEVIANT" SECT

REF: 06 JAKARTA 11921

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b,d).

11. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate Medan.

12. (C) SUMMARY: The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI)--an important national group of Muslim religious leaders--last week urged the government to ban a little-known Islamic sect. Past edicts against groups labeled deviant have prompted vigilante attacks. Police have detained approximately two dozen of the sect's followers across five provinces, ostensibly to "protect" them. This incident is a blot on Indonesia's otherwise generally positive religious freedom record. Mission will continue to urge that the GOI do all it can to protect religious freedom. END SUMMARY.

13. (SBU) MUI CALLS FOR BAN: MUI's Chairman Ma'ruf Amin on October 4 issued a fatwa (religious edict) holding that the sect, which is called Al-Qiyadah, deviates from Islam. According to Amin, sect founder Ahmad Moshadeqq claimed to be a prophet after spending 40 days and nights meditating at Mount Bunder, Bogor, West Java. The sect does not require daily prayers, fasting and the hajj pilgrimage, but they still claim to be within the Islamic tradition, he alleged. Amin's announcement followed similar statements against the sect by MUI's West Sumatra and Yogyakarta branches.

14. (SBU) The sect first appeared in 2000 and is active in all major Indonesian cities as well as parts of West Sumatra, East Java, Banten and Sulawesi. MUI contacts estimate the sect is now adding 1,000 members per month thanks (they claim) to a scheme where the sect gives a motorcycle to any member who recruits 40 new followers. Like the Ahmadiyah group, which has hundreds of thousands of followers in Indonesia, Al-Qiyadah adherents apparently believe Muhammad was not the final prophet, a belief inimical to the orthodox Sunni doctrine espoused by most Indonesian Muslims. MUI has offered to engage the group in a public dialogue about its beliefs.

15. (SBU) POLICE SWEEPS: Police in certain areas have reacted to MUI's fatwa. Following a demonstration against the group Padang, West Sumatra, where there are between 100 and 300 members, police responded by taking 11 members, including a local leader, into "protective custody." Although the detainees were subsequently released, police cautioned that it is illegal for the sect to try to recruit new members. The local prosecutor did not pursue a case against the group, having determined they had not violated laws against

"insulting" religion.

¶6. (SBU) In Pamijahan sub-district of Bogor, police have sealed off houses owned by the sect's founder to prevent "vandalism." According to local residents, the houses have been used to initiate new members and one is where Moshadeqq is said to have received revelations. Sub-district leader, Bambang Tawakal, admitted that his office knew nothing about the sect, according to press reports. Local residents seemed to have accepted the sect's presence with equanimity.

¶7. (C) A POTENTIAL NEGATIVE FOR INDONESIA: Although smaller than Ahmadiyah, the Al-Qiyadah sect is likely to attract increasing negative public attention if it continues to grow. In recent years, hard-line groups have attacked the Ahmadiyah in conservative areas of West Java and elsewhere, sometimes inspired by MUI fatwas. Without strong government action, the Al-Qiyadah group could face similar persecution. This would be unfortunate because Indonesia, over all, has a pretty good record in terms of religious freedom. Mission will continue to urge that the GOI do all it can to protect such freedoms.

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